

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

GENERAL NOTES.

THE NOMENCLATURE OF THE CHEETAHS.

Two forms of cheetahs are commonly recognized, *Cynailurus jubatus* of India and *C. guttatus* of Africa. A review of the nomenclature of the genus results in an unavoidable and entire change of names. The generic name *Acinonyx* Brookes, Catalogue of the Anatomical and Zoological Museum of Joshua Brookes, Esq., p. 16, 1828, proves, on examination of this work, to be a valid name, and it has priority over *Cynailurus* Wagler, 1830. The first name to be applied to a cheetah was *Felis jubata* Schreber, pl. cv, Die Säugethiere, 1776. From the text of this plate, published in 1777, the type-locality may be settled definitely as the Cape of Good Hope. Schreber says: "Das Vaterland dieses Thieres ist das südliche Afrika; man bekommt die Felle vom Vorgebirge der guten Hoffnung" (vol. III, pp. 392-393). This is followed by a statement that Pennant says it is also found in India, and an account of its use for hunting. The name *jubata* must, therefore, be transferred to the African cheetah. The earliest name for the Indian form is *Felis venatica* Hamilton Smith, 1827. At the time this name was proposed, *jubata* was restricted to Africa.

Of the remaining names which have, at various times, been used for cheetahs, four apply to African animals, one to the Indian species, and three may be disregarded as not originally applying to cheetahs or as indeterminable. *Felis guttata* Hermann, Obs. Zool., p. 38, 1804, is based primarily on "Prosp. Alpinus Aegypt. tab. xv, fig. 1, p. 238" (really fig. 2). The editor of Hermann's work, Frid. Lud. Hammer, has supplied a description in brackets. Alpinus' plate proves to be a drawing of a spotted cat, which the text explains was one of a litter of five seen in Cairo in the possession of a Greek courtesan. These kittens were said to have recently been born of a panther and were purchased of Arabs. The description and account which follows is very confusing and it is probably impossible to identify the animal. The name can not, at any rate, be applied to a cheetah. In Griffith's Cuvier, V, p. 175, I find the statement that "*F. guttata*, of Hermann, figured by Schreber, is stated by M. F. Cuvier to be a young panther." *Felis chalybeata* Hermann, Obs. Zool., p. 36, is likewise not determinable, and can be ignored as a cheetah name. It probably really refers to an American spotted cat, though the name later applied to such an animal by various authors is said not to be the

chalybeata of Hermann. I am not able to satisfy myself that *F. megabalia* Hartmann, Zeitschr. ges. Erdkund Berlin, 1868, III, no. 13, p. 55, applies to a cheetah. The animal is said to live in central Africa and to resemble the *F. jubata* of Schreber's plate.

From an examination of the specimens in the National Museum it seems probable that *Acinonyx soemmeringii* (Fitzinger) will have to be recognized as a distinct form, but the material is at present too scanty for conclusive results. The two currently recognized forms will stand as follows:

Acinonyx jubatus (Schreber).

AFRICAN CHEETAH.

1776. *Felis jubata* SCHREBER, Die Säugethiere, pl. cv. (Cape of Good Hope).
 1855. *Cynailurus soemmeringii* FITZINGER, Sitz.-Ber. Math. nat. cl. d. K. akad. Wiss., xvi, lft. 2, p. 245. (Bajda Steppe, Kordofan.)
 1868. *Felis jubata* var. *africana* HARTMANN, Zeitschr. ges. Erdkund Berlin, III, no. 13, p. 56. (New name for the combined *C. guttatus* and *C. soemmeringii* of Fitzinger.)
 1869. *Felis fearonis* FITZINGER, Sitz.-Ber. Kais. Akad. Wiss., lix, I abth., p. 664. (Cape of Good Hope, l. c., p. 667.)
 1877. *Felis lanea* SCLATER, Proc. Zool. Soc. London, p. 532. (Beaufort West, Cape Colony.)

Acinonyx venaticus (Smith).

INDIAN CHEETAH.

1827. *Felis venatica* SMITH, Griffith's Cuvier, V, p. 166. (India.)
 1828. *Acinonyx venator* BROOKES, Cat. Anat. & Zool. Mus. of Joshua Brookes, p. 16. (India.)

—N. Hollister.

ON THE CORRECT NAME FOR THE RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD
OF THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES.

Examination of the series of breeding Red-winged Blackbirds recently collected by Messrs. E. J. Brown, J. H. Riley, and E. A. Mearns, in Charleston County, South Carolina, develops the fact that the form resident on the coastal plain of South Carolina is identical with the Florida bird at present known as *Agelaius phoeniceus floridanus* Maynard, with which it exactly agrees in size and coloration; and resident South Carolina birds also have the longer and more slender bill of the Florida form.

Linnæus based his [*Oriolus*] *phœniceus* on Catesby's *Sturnus niger, alis superne rubentis* (Nat. Hist. Carolina, I, p. 13, pl. 13). Catesby's figure of an adult male indicates, by the complete nuptial plumage and slenderness of the bill, that the form portrayed was the resident bird of South Carolina, and not a migrant or winter resident from the north. The text also shows that the author was very familiar with the breeding haunts and nesting habits of the bird, with relation to the ocean tides, making it very probable that the individual figured was taken on the coast.